



**City Council  
Agenda Report**

**DATE:** July 26, 2022  
**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**FROM:** Jose Dorado, Housing Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Mid-Year Update on Homeless Programs

---

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council receives the mid-year report and provides feedback, recommendations, and direction on homeless-related programming and funding.

**BACKGROUND:**

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a mid-year report on the homeless programs managed by the City. This report provides a summary of programs, a program assessment, and recommendations.

***Summary of Programs***

Since 2020, the City has funded or operated 12 different homeless-related programs or projects, and allocated nearly \$2.9 million in general and other housing and community development funds to support those programs. The programs operated by the City have one of three aims:

1. housing homeless individuals (both temporary and permanent housing),
2. preventing homelessness, or
3. addressing community impacts as a result of homelessness.

The following sections of this report provide updates on these programs, most of which are ongoing. This includes re-allocated funds that were approved by City Council on April 26, 2022 in the amount of \$230,691 using Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus Relief Act funding (CDBG-CV). Table I below also provides additional information on expenditures and program outcomes.

**El Cajon Homeless Outreach & Flexible Housing Assistance Program**

In September 2020, the City contracted with Home Start, Inc. to provide a dedicated Homeless Outreach Specialist along with flexible housing assistance funds to help homeless individuals and families in El Cajon. The Outreach Specialist (or Navigator) connects homeless households with services and works to secure permanent housing. The program is funded with Low and Moderate Income Housing Asset Funds (LMIHAF) totaling \$200,000 annually. The contract is set to renew in September 2022.

### A Way Back Home Program

In October 2020, the City contracted with The Salvation Army (TSA) to make the “A Way Back Home” program available once again. This program reunites homeless individuals in El Cajon with their families by providing assistance with transportation, food and sometimes an overnight stay while en route. In the last six months, program participation has increased by assisting twelve (12) individuals. This is an increase of about 33%, showing a positive adjustment with changes made to their internal procedures to increase program performance. The program is also funded with LMIHAF funds of \$10,000 annually. This contract is set to renew in October 2022.

### Emergency Shelter Program

The City contracts annually with the East County Transitional Living Center (ECTLC) to fund the Emergency Shelter Program using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, currently totaling \$100,000. This non-faith-based program typically operates primarily in the winter months, providing emergency shelter, case management, meals and other services for families and individuals experiencing homelessness. CDBG funds were awarded to this program as part of the annual allocation process for the current FY 22-23.

Moreover, in 2020, the City Council awarded \$185,294 in CDBG-CV funding for the continuation of these essential services beyond the winter months to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness to reduce their risk of exposure to, and to prevent the spread of, COVID-19. In May 2021, the City Council awarded another \$100,000 in CDBG-CV funding for FY 21-22 and on April 26, 2022, City Council awarded an additional \$75,691 in CDBG-CV funding for FY 22-23.

### Rotational Shelter Program

The City also contracts annually with the Interfaith Shelter Network (ISN) to fund the Rotational Shelter Program using CDBG funds totaling \$10,000. This program typically provides seasonal, nighttime shelter for homeless individuals and families at East County area places of worship that volunteer to provide shelter, meals and support.

With COVID-19, the rotational shelter program was required to modify its operations in 2020 to accommodate shelter guests at area motels instead of on religious properties, in order to ensure the safety of the volunteers and congregants. ISN continues to work with the congregations, and plans to return to the typical rotational shelter model, however operations continue at area motels. ISN was awarded \$10,893 as part of the FY 22-23 CDBG allocation.

### Rental Housing/Utility Assistance (COVID-19)

In May 2020, the City Council awarded CDBG-CV funding for a new rental housing and utility assistance program to assist individuals and families impacted by COVID-19, to keep them from losing their homes and falling into homelessness. A total of \$572,362 was awarded to three agencies (CSA San Diego County, Interfaith Shelter Network, and Home Start, Inc.) to provide the services. The three agencies operated the program continuously from May 2020 to February 2021, expending a total of \$433,320.

In March 2021, the County of San Diego opened its emergency rental/utility assistance program ("ERAP"). The ERAP funds were able to pay for much deeper assistance (covering up to 18 months of rent and utilities) and El Cajon residents were eligible to apply. The City's housing and utility assistance program was permanently suspended as of August 2021, and all residents were referred to the ERAP program. The ERAP stopped accepting new applications at the end of March 2022. Through the ERAP program, 4,770 households were awarded over \$40 million in County assistance. No new ERAP program has been identified at this time. However, the County is working on implementing a "shallow" rent subsidy program for seniors that is scheduled to be launched in the Fall/Winter of 2022.

#### Emergency Motel Stays Program

In 2020 and 2021, the City Council awarded a total of \$145,000 in CDBG-CV funding to Home Start, Inc. for the provision of an emergency motel voucher program to assist homeless families and individuals with immediate shelter to reduce their risk of exposure and to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Between June 2020 and May 2021, the program assisted 243 homeless individuals, with an average stay of approximately 7 nights and an average cost of \$587 per person. The program also served as a gateway to permanent housing for 47 individuals. The program concluded in 2021, and a new, refined Emergency (Scatter-Site) Motel program was implemented, with a new allocation of CDBG-CV funding, as described below.

#### East County Homeless Task Force

Since 2019, the City has annually contributed \$5,000 from the General Fund to assist in sustaining the East County Homeless Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force, with new direction, plays a role in coordinating efforts in the East County region as well as helping to understand homeless service needs. In addition to financial support, the city manager participates on the organization's steering committee. However, more recently, the ECHTF has taken on more of an advocating role. Staff seeks City Council direction to continue to support this effort.

#### Neighborhood Quality of Life Team

Between January 2020 and June 2022, the Neighborhood Quality of Life Team (a multi-departmental team) provided 324 clean-up events throughout the City. The team is supported by a contract for cleaning services with Urban Corps. The Quality of Life Team ensures that the City's parks, right-of-ways, and drainage channels are clear of debris and trash. In the past six months, the City has removed 69.25 tons of debris from parks, streets and drainage channels. To date, the City's contractor has removed at least 236.25 tons of debris. Clean-up costs are funded solely by the General Fund.

#### Homeless Outreach Events

Police Department staff previously accompanied homeless service providers twice per month in an effort to make contact and offer assistance to the City's homeless community. In March of 2021, the number of outreach events was increased, and the outreach events are now occurring every Friday. The City's contribution to this program continues to be two police officers for three hours per event. A typical outreach event results in 6 to 15 homeless individuals being contacted. These costs have been funded by the General Fund.

### Emergency Scatter-Site Motel Program

In May 2021, the City Council awarded \$400,000 in CDBG-CV funding to Home Start, Inc. for the provision of a refined emergency motel program to assist homeless families and individuals with immediate shelter, to reduce their risk of exposure and to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This program provides emergency motel room vouchers, housing placement and emergency housing assistance for homeless families and individuals impacted by COVID-19 that are housing-focused and housing-ready, with the goal of attaining permanent housing.

### Acquisition and/or Rehabilitation of Facility Serving the Homeless

In May 2021, the City Council allocated the balance of the CDBG-CV funds (\$299,307) for assisting in the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of a facility for use as a shelter or navigation center. The funds are likely to be leveraged with other available funding (potentially with other jurisdictions as explained below). The funds will be set aside until an appropriate facility, operator, and funding source are identified, and must be expended within a three-year timeframe. Until a project is identified, the funds will remain on reserve for this purpose.

### Outreach Support Services Program

On April 26, 2022, the City Council awarded \$155,000 in available CDBG-CV funds to Home Start, Inc. to launch the Outreach Support Services Program. This new program was created to bolster existing outreach efforts during the coronavirus pandemic. This program provides street-based outreach and hosts weekly outreach events for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. These outreach events provide connections to vital resources such as housing, food and employment for homeless families and individuals affected by COVID-19. Accomplishments for this program will be included in the next report.

### East San Diego County Homeless Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

On April 26, 2022, City Council adopted a resolution approving an MOU between cities in east San Diego County and the County of San Diego as part of their City Council Action Plan. This MOU serves as a way to effectively address a multi-jurisdictional approach to homeless-related issues. East San Diego County cities include El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove and Santee, who all have executed the MOU. This MOU can facilitate the collaboration between jurisdictions in order to leverage funding for the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of a facility for use as a shelter or navigation center.

### ***Program Outcomes***

Over the last 24 months, the City has allocated nearly \$2.6 million to direct homeless assistance/housing programs, over \$300,000 on neighborhood clean-up efforts, and \$15,000 to the Task Force, for a total of nearly \$2.9 million. Between January 2020 and June 2022, staff estimates that more than 3,230 individuals have received shelter and services, 2,414 of those were assisted with some form of housing or shelter, and 816 individuals were assisted into permanent housing.

The table below identifies the total expenditures between January 2020 and June 2022 (a total of 30 months) for each program discussed above, and the results of those expenditures.

| <b>Program</b>   | <b>Expenditures<br/>January 2020 -<br/>June 2022*</b> | <b>Outcomes<br/>January 2020 - June 2022</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| El Cajon Homeless Outreach and Flexible Housing Assistance Program<br>(Home Start, Inc.) | \$237,881   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 800 households (1,105 persons) enrolled in the program</li> <li>● 96 households permanently housed (180 persons) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Average of \$2,478 per household housed</li> </ul> </li> <li>● 39 households (60 persons) housed in bridge housing</li> </ul>  |
| A Way Back Home Program<br>(The Salvation Army)  | \$5,899   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 20 households permanently housed (21 persons)</li> <li>● Average of \$295 per household housed</li> </ul>  |
| Emergency Shelter Program<br>(ECTLC)   | \$536,329   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 306 individuals sheltered (annual FY 19-20 CDBG funding)</li> <li>● 385 individuals sheltered (annual FY 20-21 CDBG funding)</li> <li>● 286 individuals sheltered to date (annual FY 21-22 CDBG funding)</li> <li>● 740 individuals sheltered (CDBG-CV funding)</li> <li>● Total of 1,717 individuals sheltered over the past 30 months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Of this total, 5 households and 420 individuals (286 adults and 134 children) have moved into permanent housing with assistance from ECTLC</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

|  |                  |  |
|--|------------------|--|
| Rotational Shelter Program<br>(Interfaith Shelter Network)   | \$20,000         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 38 individuals sheltered (annual FY 20-21 CDBG funding)</li> <li>● 69 individuals sheltered to date (annual FY 21-22 CDBG funding)</li> <li>● 53 individuals moved into permanent housing with assistance from ISN</li> <li>● During the last 6 months, 100% of individuals (total of 21 persons) moved either into permanent housing or bridge housing.</li> </ul> |
| Housing/Utility Assistance Program<br><br>(CSA San Diego County, Interfaith Shelter Network, Home Start, Inc.) | \$434,104        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 103 households assisted to remain in their homes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Average of \$4,206 per household</li> </ul> </li> <li>● This program ran continuously from May 2020 to February 2021. It is no longer available.</li> </ul>   |
| Emergency Motel Stays Program<br>(Home Start, Inc.)  | \$142,568        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 243 individuals sheltered</li> <li>● 1,646 night stays (average stay per person is 7 nights)</li> <li>● 47 individuals moved into permanent housing (19%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Average cost of \$587 per person</li> </ul> </li> <li>● This program ran continuously from June 2020 to May 2021. It is no longer available.</li> </ul>          |
| Emergency (Scatter-Site) Motel Program<br>(Home Start, Inc.)   | \$361,171        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 151 households (240 persons) to date have enrolled in program</li> <li>● 14 households (19 persons) permanently housed</li> <li>● 8 households (15 persons) housed in bridge housing</li> </ul>   |
| East County Homeless Task Force  | \$5,000 per year | Assists in regional coordination   |

|                                   |            |   |
|-----------------------------------|------------|---|
| Neighborhood Quality of Life Team | >\$300,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 324 clean-ups conducted</li> <li>● 494.25 tons of debris removed by City team</li> <li>● 236.25 tons of debris removed by City contractor</li> </ul> |
| Homeless Outreach Events          | \$55,232   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 78 outreach events conducted</li> <li>● 6 to 15 homeless individuals contacted per event</li> </ul>  |

\*Expenditures based on paid invoices through June 30, 2022.

### ***Program Assessment***

The staff believe that the majority of the City's programs are functioning well to help achieve the goal of securing permanent housing for those experiencing homelessness and to address community impacts as a result of homelessness. In the last 2.5 years, over 816 persons have been assisted with finding permanent housing.

The El Cajon Outreach & Flexible Housing Assistance Program has become an essential component of the City's ability to respond to homelessness. Home Start, Inc. has proven to be a valuable partner and player in the region, with knowledgeable staff and responsive services to meet the needs. Home Start, Inc. appears to be effective at finding resources, establishing and maintaining relationships, utilizing the resources prudently and only as needed, and meeting the compliance and program requirements of all of its funding partners.

The A Way Back Home Program has seen an increase in the number of homeless individuals served, compared to the last report. It continues to fill a gap in services for those homeless individuals who have family members that are willing to receive and support them. Without this program, homeless individuals who want to "go home" would be without resources to connect with those family members who are willing to receive them, particularly due to the high cost of transportation. Staff recommends continuing to provide this cost-effective program through TSA for an additional year in order to keep this resource available for those who need it.

The Emergency Shelter (through ECTLC) and the Rotational Shelter (through Interfaith Shelter Network) programs continue to address the need for basic overnight shelter and services for those experiencing homelessness in the City. Each fulfills a different need in the community and staff consider the programs cost-effective and essential.

The Emergency (Scatter-Site) Motel program has been underway for about eight months now with an allocation of CDBG-CV funding, as described above. Home Start, Inc. has almost fully expended its funds on this program, although it does continue to utilize other available funds for this service. This extends the benefits of the services as far as possible in the community. The program assists individuals and families on a path to securing permanent housing.

The new Outreach Support Service program is now active with an allocation of CDBG-CV funding, as described above. Home Start, Inc. is currently working to enroll individuals under this program to ensure they are connected with vital resources in their community that will assist them in securing permanent or bridge housing. This program provides a pop-up event each week and serves to connect homeless individuals to other programs available through Home Start, Inc and throughout San Diego County.

The City's Neighborhood Quality of Life Team and the Homeless Outreach Events continue to perform vital services and address community impacts as a result of homelessness within the City, and will be continued throughout 2022.

Finally, staff is also continuing to work with neighboring jurisdictions (including the County) through the MOU process on a regional approach to jointly address homelessness in East County. Staff will return to City Council once a project or facility serving the homeless is identified. The MOU, as described above, is awaiting San Diego County staff approval and signature.

### ***Recommendations***

Staff makes the following recommendations based on the approved FY 22-23 budget:

1. Continue the El Cajon Homeless Outreach & Flexible Housing Assistance and the A Way Back Home programs;
2. Continue the Emergency Shelter, Rotational Shelter, Emergency (Scatter-Site) Motel program and the Outreach Support Services program;
3. Continue to work with neighboring jurisdictions, including the County, on a regional approach to jointly addressing homelessness in East County;
4. Continue the Homeless Outreach Events and the enhanced Neighborhood Quality of Life Team efforts; and
5. Consider whether to continue support for the East County Homeless Task Force.

Staff will continue to monitor program performance and determine if additional funding is available at the close of the 2021-2022 fiscal year to potentially increase funding for successful programs that address the current needs of the community.

At this time, staff asks the City Council to accept the report and provide any feedback, recommendations, and direction on homeless programming and funding.

Prepared By: Jose Dorado, Housing Manager and Deyanira Pelayo-Brito, Housing Specialist

Reviewed By: Anthony Shute, Director of Community Development

Approved By: Graham Mitchell, City Manager

---